Fellowship - HE Metropolitan Youssef

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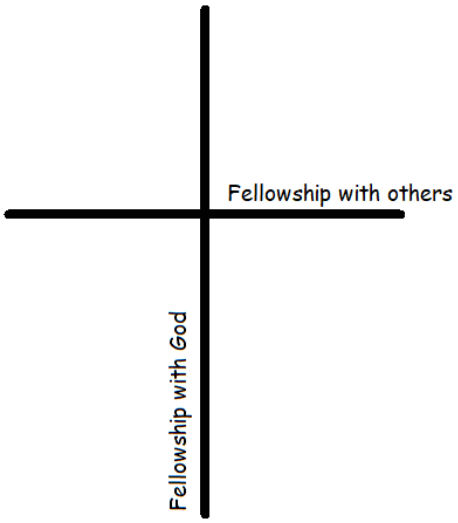
"Behold what is so good or what so pleasant, as for brothers dwelling together? It is as ointment upon the head, that came down upon the beard, the beard of Aaron that came down to the fringe of his clothing; as the dew of Aermon, that comes down upon the mountain of Zion, for there the Lord commanded the blessing and the life forever. Alleluia." - Psalm 133 (132 LXX)

The ointment and the dew signify the blessing - this is the blessing that we receive when we gather together in the Holy Spirit

Fellowship = κοινωνία = Having things in common

Fellowship with God and Others

- "God *is* faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." (1 Cor 1:9)
  - The ultimate purpose and goal of our life is to be in fellowship with God (Theosis)
  - Fellowship is the destiny, it is the end; preaching, teaching, helping the poor, evangelism, etc. are all means of achieving the end: Fellowship with God
- "that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have **fellowship with us**; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ." (1 John 1:3)
- So our fellowship is in two dimensions: vertical (fellowship with God) and horizontal (fellowship with others)



- This fellowship on earth is fulfilled in the Mystery of the Eucharist: **ALL OF US** are eating and drinking from the same paten and chalice (horizontal) and we are eating the **BODY AND BLOOD OF GOD** (vertical)
- This is why our life is CENTERED around the Eucharist. The centrality of all services in the Church is the Eucharist.

Blessings of Fellowship

- Fullness of Joy (1 John 1:4)
  - "And these things we write to you that your joy may be **full**." (1 John 1:4)
  - **Fullness** of joy results from fullness of fellowship with God and with others
- Cleansing from sin (1 John 1:5-10)
  - "This is the message which we have heard from Him and declared to you"
    - Divine reality that is declared to us
  - "God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth."
    - If we entertain a wrong attitude, we are in darkness and thus excluded from the light. If God is light, then we are excluded from the fellowship of God
  - "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin"
    - Produces fellowship with one another and produces continual cleansing
  - We are all sinners, but the differences between those walking in darkness and walking in light is repentance. The Blood of Christ does not cleanse from sin those who are walking in darkness
  - "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."
    - Walking in light is NOT the same as being sinless, but the key is repentance
  - "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
  - John 3:19-21
    - If I run away or escape from the light, then I will have no fellowship with God
    - But if I come to the light in order to be cleansed, then I will have true Koinonia with God and others

    - Isaiah 31:9b
        - "Says the Lord, whose fire is in Zion and whose furnace is in Jerusalem"
        - Fire and furnace refer to purification - where does purification happen? In Zion and Jerusalem = **In the Church**

Fellowship is the Birthplace of God's Purpose

- God's purpose is revealed in fellowship, not in isolation/separation
- Fellowship between the Holy Trinity
    - The decision to create mankind came out of Fellowship
        - "Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness;'" (Genesis 1:26)
    - The decision to expel mankind from the Paradise came out of Fellowship
        - "Then the Lord God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and life forever" - therefore the Lord God sent him out of the garden of Eden."
    - The decision to disperse mankind and confound their language came out of the Fellowship of the Holy Trinity
        - "Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech.” (Genesis 11:7)
    - In the time of Isaiah, the quest for a messenger for Israel came from the Holy Trinity
        - "Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: 'Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?' Then I said, 'Here *am* I! Send me.'" (Isaiah 6:8)
- Fellowship between God and us
    - Acts 13, 14, 15
    - John 3:6
    - 1 John 5:4

Fellowship's Demands from Us

- "Submitting to one another in the fear of God." (Ephesians 5:21)
    - Commitment to walk in the fear of God
    - Submission to one another (in the day-to-day)
        - Our ego makes us rigid, stubborn, not flexible
        - One of the features of Divine Wisdom is "willing to yield"
            - "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy." (James 3:17)
- "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers." (Acts 2:42)
    - Apostolic Doctrine
        - Be a disciple to the Scripture, Early Church Texts, Apostolic Canons, Ecumenical Councils, Liturgical Texts
    - Fellowship

    - Coming together in fellowship (Bible Study, Midnight Praises, Aghapy meal, meetings and assemblies, etc.)
  - Breaking of Bread
    - Eucharist
  - Prayers

The Outcome of Fellowship

- "And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved." (Acts 2:47)
  - "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:35)

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